

# A Subaltern's Fate

## *The Office of Tourmarch, Seventh through Twelfth Century*

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Between 1932 and 1939, a multi-institution excavation, led by Princeton University, took place at Antioch-on-the-Orontes. Although the mosaics from the nearby suburb of Daphne are the most visible results of these excavations, a large quantity of ceramics, coins, and other materials, along with field diaries, are held at Princeton. A recent pilot project has reexamined the material found in sector 17-O, located along the main road of the city.<sup>1</sup> Along with the ceramics and coins, four lead seals were found. The best preserved of these, dating to the late tenth or the early eleventh century, belongs to the *tourmarch* Christopher Raphianos (fig. 1).<sup>2</sup> Christopher's seal

illustrates the culmination of a centuries-long development in the office of tourmarch and its relationship with title, place, and power.

This article draws together written and sigillographic evidence to investigate the office of tourmarch from the seventh through the twelfth century. It analyzes seals published in catalogues and articles, as well as unpublished specimens in the Dumbarton Oaks and Fogg collections.<sup>3</sup> I begin with a survey of the sources

1 For the "commercial and industrial zone" of 17-O and surrounding sectors, see A. A. Eger, "(Re)Mapping Medieval Antioch: Urban Transformation from the Early Islamic to the Middle Byzantine Period," *DOP* 67 (2013): 117–23. For information on the pilot project, see <http://antioch.princeton.edu> (accessed 1 October 2015).

2 Ca266, Princeton Museum. The seal presents a bilateral inscription: .Ε...ΩC...Λ...ΠΙ...|ΦΟΡΟ—ΤΟΝ,|ΜΑΡΧΙ|ΤΡΑΦΙ|ΑΝΟ—[Κ(ύρι)]ε [β(οή)θ(ει) τ]ῷ σ[ῷ δού]λ[ῳ Χ]ρι[στο]φ[ό]ρο του[ρ]-μάρχη τ[ῷ] Παφιάνο. It is unclear whether the *tau* on the first third line of the reverse is the first letter of the dative direct article or of the surname Τραφιάνος. The former is more likely, as it is rare for inscriptions on seals to lack a direct object before the surname. Raphianos is not otherwise attested on seals or in written sources. The suffixes -ianos and -ites combine with place-names, in this case possibly Raphia (mod. Rafah), on the modern border between Israel and Egypt. If this is correct, it could indicate that this Christopher belonged to a family from the Levant. See J.-C. Cheynet, "Aristocratic Anthroponymy in Byzantium," in *The Byzantine Aristocracy and Its Military Function*,

Variorum Collected Studies Series 859 (Aldershot and Burlington, VT, 2006), 3:16.

3 The following publications, which include seals of tourmarchs, have been consulted: *DOSeals* 1–5; I. Jordanov, *Corpus of Byzantine Seals from Bulgaria*, 3 vols. (Sofia, 2003–9); W. Seibt, *Die byzantinischen Bleisiegel in Österreich*, vol. 1, *Kaiserhof* (Vienna, 1978); W. Seibt and A.-K. Wassiliou, *Die byzantinischen Bleisiegel in Österreich*, vol. 2, *Zentral- und Provinzialverwaltung* (Vienna, 2004); P. Speck, *Byzantinische Bleisiegel in Berlin (West)* (Bonn, 1986); C. Sode, *Byzantinische Bleisiegel in Berlin*, vol. 2 (Bonn, 1997); K. M. Konstantopoulos, *Βυζαντιακά μολυβδόβουλλα τοῦ ἐν Ἀθῆναις Ἐθνικοῦ Νομισματικοῦ Μουσείου* (Athens, 1917); idem, *Βυζαντιακά μολυβδόβουλλα (Συλλογή Κ. Π. Σταμούλη)* (Athens, 1930); J.-C. Cheynet, *Sceaux de la collection Zacos (Bibliothèque nationale de France) se rapportant aux provinces orientales de l'Empire byzantin* (Paris, 2001); V. Laurent, *Le corpus des sceaux de l'Empire byzantin*, vol. 2, *L'administration centrale* (Paris, 1981); idem, *La collection C. Orghidan* (Paris, 1952); idem, *Les sceaux byzantins du Médailler Vatican* (Vatican City, 1962); G. Zacos and A. Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, vol. 1 (Basel 1972); G. Zacos, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, vol. 2, ed. J. W. Nesbitt (Bern, 1984); J.-C. Cheynet, C. Morrisson, and W. Seibt, *Sceaux byzantins de la collection Henri Seyrig* (Paris, 1991); G. Schlumberger, *Sigillographie*



FIG. 1 Christopher Raphianos, tourmarch (late tenth/early eleventh century), Ca266 (Princeton University Numismatic Collection, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Firestone Library)

and current definitions, then proceed to an analysis of the most important individual source, the *Taktika* of Leo VI, addressing the relationship between that text and the *Strategikon* of Maurice, as well as between the tourmarch and *merarch*. I then turn to the office's duties and authority, as well as the changing social profile of the officers across time. Finally, I discuss the role of tourmarchs as local actors and the fate of the office, much transformed, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, with particular reference to the documents from southern Italy.

## Sources and Definitions

References to tourmarchs are found in sources that relate events beginning in the first third of the seventh century. Although none of these sources was composed before the beginning of the ninth century, seals provide confirmation for tourmarchs as early as the late sixth/

early seventh century.<sup>4</sup> A TLG search for “tourmarch” gives a sense of the frequency of references to the office as well as the contexts in which they appear, even if the total yield is not comprehensive.<sup>5</sup> Of the 233 results, a majority comes from tenth-century documents. Eighty-seven come from three Byzantine military manuals (*Taktika*, *Sylloge tacticorum*, and *De velitatione bellica*), and an additional forty-four from the works of Constantine VII and his circle (*De ceremoniis*, *De administrando imperio*, *De thematibus*, and an *Oratio ad milites*).<sup>6</sup> Most of the remaining references fall into two categories: individuals from chronicles or histories (forty-seven)<sup>7</sup> and exemption lists (nineteen).<sup>8</sup>

The chronological imbalance of the sources colors definitions of the office and its duties. The *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* notes, for example, that Christopher, tourmarch of the Thrakesion, acted independently when Justinian II sent him to Cherson in 711, and that tourmarchs “held fiscal and judicial authority over the population in his region.”<sup>9</sup> The context for these points, however, is a normative definition

4 Marinos (first half of seventh century): Cheynet, Morrisson, and Seibt, *Seyrig*, no. 222; a seal belonging to the same person was found at Tyre: Zacos-Veglery, no. 927 (Marinos, hypatos).

5 For example, at the time of writing, the TLG does not include the *vitae* of Maria the Younger and Basil the Younger, some letters of Michael Psellos, inscriptions, and southern Italian (Greek) sources.

6 In addition, the *Taktikon Uspenskij* lists tourmarch sixteen times, the *Taktikon Beneshevich* once, the *vita* of Theodore of Kythera three times, the letters of Theodore of Stoudios twice, and the *Patria* once.

7 These forty-seven references, however, refer to only twenty-two distinct individuals or groups. Tourmarchs appear in ten different chronicles: Kedrenos (5), Genesios (3), George the Monk (3), the continuator of George the Monk (3), Skylitzes (5), Symeon Logothete (3), Zonaras (1), pseudo-Symeon (2), Theophanes Confessor (13), and Theophanes Continuatus (9). With the exception of Theophanes, all these chroniclers attest some, if not all, of the same individuals.

8 In these exemption lists, tourmarchs appear in formulas that both free the exemption holders from having to lodge a list of military and fiscal officers, and bind those officers to respect the exemptions laid down in the document. For the structure of exemption lists and their relationship to historical reality, see N. Oikonomides, *Fiscalité et exemption fiscale à Byzance (IX<sup>e</sup>–XI<sup>e</sup> s.)* (Athens, 1996), 273–89, 300, and 304. On the continued appearance of tourmarchs and other thematic officials in the exemption lists, thus attesting their presence in the Balkans as a line of defense, see C. Holmes, *Basil II and the Governance of Empire (976–1025)* (Oxford, 2005), 407–9. An additional thirteen references from seven different monastic documents attest to named tourmarchs either involved in legal disputes or appearing as witnesses. These are discussed below.

9 ODB 3:2100–2101.

*de l'Empire byzantin* (Paris, 1884); N. P. Likhachev, *Molivdovuly grecheskogo vostoka*, ed. V. S. Shandrovskaja (Moscow, 1991); W. de Gray Birch, *Catalogue of Seals in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London, 1898); B. A. Pančenko, *Kollekcii Russkago Archeologičeskago Instituta v Konstantinopolē: Katalog molivdovulov* (Sofia, 1908); V. S. Shandrovskaja, “Sfragistika,” in *Iskusstvo Vizantii v sobranijach SSSR (Katalog vystavki)*, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1977); V. S. Shandrovskaja and W. Seibt, *Byzantinische Bleisiegel der Staatlichen Eremitage mit Familiennamen*, vol. 1, *Sammlung Lichačev—Namen von A bis I* (Vienna, 2005); J.-C. Cheynet, T. Gökyıldırım, and V. Bulgurlu, *Les sceaux byzantins du Musée archéologique d'Istanbul* (Istanbul, 2012), as well as seals published in articles and auction catalogues (see *SBS*, vols. 3, 5, 6, 8, and 10). Approximately half of seals belonging to tourmarchs in the Dumbarton Oaks and Fogg Museum collections are unpublished.

emerging from the tenth-century materials: on the one hand, Christopher's actions (it is implied) differ from his expected duties and, on the other, the officer's authority is presented as being both military and civil in scope. In addition, several sources indicate that there were between two and four tourmarchs in each theme, but the creation of new themes on the eastern frontier in the 930s and 940s upset the traditional structure of provincial and military administration. An extraordinarily high number of officers has been cited as a hallmark of this new arrangement, present in both the "Armenian" themes as well as in southern Italy.<sup>10</sup> I will approach this from a different angle and argue that while the presence of tourmarchs provides evidence for the development of provincial administrative structures, these same structures reciprocally signal changes in the duties and authority of the office and its social profile.

### Tourmarchs and Merarchs

Approximately one-sixth of references to tourmarchs come from the *Taktika* of Leo VI, and addressing how the office is presented in that work is a natural starting point for tracing the shape of the office over time. The *Taktika* is a fairly conservative document, drawing heavily on the late sixth- or early seventh-century *Strategikon* attributed to Maurice. Interpreting its prescriptions, including the organization of the army and the duties of various officers, requires understanding the relationship between the two texts.

During the Roman and late antique periods, *turma* signified a division of cavalry.<sup>11</sup> By the middle Byzantine period, *tourma* is the basic subdivision of the thematic army, consisting of both infantry and cavalry. The early seventh century seems to have been a watershed for the terminology of the offices under discussion. No mention is made in the *Strategikon* of tourmas or tourmarchs; the basic division of the army is into three *mere*, commanded by merarchs.<sup>12</sup>

10 N. Oikonomides, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IX<sup>e</sup> et X<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris, 1972), 345–46.

11 Comprising approximately thirty-two men led by a *decurio*; see K. R. Dixon and P. Southern, *The Roman Cavalry: From the First to the Third Century AD* (London, 1992), 23–31.

12 Unlike *tourmarch*, the term *merarch* has a classical pedigree and is included seven times in the military manuals of Asklepiodotus (first century BCE), Arrian, and Aelian (both second century CE).

Furthermore, in many passages, *merarch* tends to be a generic term for a senior military officer.<sup>13</sup> References to the office cease after the *Strategikon*, which provides almost half of all mentions.<sup>14</sup> A tourmarch first appears in written sources in 627 and on seals from the first half of the seventh century. Quite likely, they remained associated with the cavalry divisions, not acquiring broader command until the eighth century, when they are much better represented both in the sources and on seals.

The late ninth/early tenth century represents a second period of change, signaled by the reappearance of merarchs on seals and in official documents compiled during the reign of Constantine VII, but which may have been originally produced during the late ninth century (see below). The *Taktika* refers to merarchs in two ways: as the old term for tourmarch and as a specific type of tourmarch.

That the tourmarch of Leo's time is equivalent to the merarch of Maurice's time is made clear in the listing of officers in constitution four: "νῦν δὲ ὑποστράτηγος οὐ γνωρίζεται, εἰ μὴ τι καλούμενος μεράρχης. καὶ τουρμάρχης ἐστὶν ὁ ποτε καλούμενος μεράρχης ἥτοι ὁ τοῦ μέρους τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐμπεπιστευμένος."<sup>15</sup> Several other passages, copied more or less directly from the *Strategikon*, make this explicit

These works identify the officer as the leader of a *merarchia*, consisting of 2,048 men (i.e., two chiliarchies of 1,024 men); Asklepiodotus, *Techne taktike*, 2.10, in *Aeneas Tacticus, Asclepiodotus, Onasander*, ed. and trans. W. A. Oldfather (London and New York, 1923), 260; Arrian, *Techne taktike*, 10.5, in *Flavii Arriani quae exstant omnia*, ed. A. G. Roos and G. Wirth (Leipzig, 1967–68), 140; Aelian, *Tactica theoria*, 9.7, in H. Köchly and W. Rüstow, *Griechische Kriegsschriftsteller* (Leipzig, 1853–55), 2.1:292.

13 J. F. Haldon, *A Critical Commentary on the Taktika of Leo VI*, DOS 44 (Washington, DC, 2014), 147.

14 A TLG search for "merarch" and "meriarch" yields eighty-eight results, forty in the *Strategikon* alone. In addition, seven are found in the classical authors, nine in the *Taktika*, nine in the *De ceremoniis*, one in Genesios, one in the anonymous *De re strategica*, one in the anonymous *Sylloge tacticorum*, seventeen in exemption lists, and three in lexica (the *Souda* and the *Etymologicum magnum*). This count does not include the results for μεράρχια (21) and μεραρχικόν (2). Again, the limitations of the TLG mean that not every reference to merarchs in the written sources appears, including Michael, the son-in-law of Eustathios Boilas, mentioned twice in his will; see P. Lemerle, "Le testament d'Eustathios Boilas (avril 1059)," in *Cinq études sur le XI<sup>e</sup> siècle byzantin* (Paris, 1977), 23.109 and 29.278.

15 *The Taktika of Leo VI*, ed. and trans. G. T. Dennis, rev. ed. (Washington, DC, 2014), 4§§9–10.69–71.

by adding a short clause identifying the former merarch as “[the officer] whom we call tourmarch”: “ὁ . . . μεράρχης ἦτοι στρατηλάτης ὃν τουρμάρχην καλούμεν”;<sup>16</sup> “τὰς δὲ μοίρας ταύτας ἦτοι τοὺς δρούγγους συνάξεις εἰς μέρη ἡγουν τούρμας καὶ ἐπιστήσονται αὐτοῖς γνώμη τῆς βασιλείας ἡμῶν μεράρχαι, οἱ λεγόμενοι ποτε καὶ στρατηλάται, νῦν δὲ τῇ συνηθείᾳ καλούμενοι τουρμάρχαι”;<sup>17</sup> and, in a slightly different form, “τὸν τοῦ μέρους ἄρχοντα, εἴτε τουρμάρχης ἐστὶν εἴτε ἕτερός τις.”<sup>18</sup> This last passage shows that the *Taktika* tends to “institutionalize” offices more so than does the *Strategikon*: tourmarch replaces not only “merarch” but also “leader of the meros,”<sup>19</sup> while the *Taktika* never uses this periphrastic construction with tourma. Far more frequently, in about one-half the references to tourmarchs, the change is silent, with tourmarch substituted for merarch in passages that otherwise show little if any revision. This can be seen, for instance, in three sections dealing with battle standards.<sup>20</sup>

Leo or his redactor looked to the *Strategikon* as a model. But beyond providing a structure and vocabulary, which was updated to account for changes in offices and terminology, the *Taktika* also reflects changes in the Byzantine army and society between the beginning of the seventh and end of the ninth century.<sup>21</sup> When the *Taktika* presents merarch as a current office, it seems to provide a clear picture of how the office is distinguished from that of tourmarch, at least in the context of the line of battle. Constitution twelve refers to the leader of the center meros as the “merarch of the theme” (τοῦ θέματος μεράρχην). Similarly, constitution four states that there should be three tourmarchs, who were formerly called merarchs and *stratelatai*, and that the tourmarch of the center

meros, formerly called the *hypostrategos*, is now called merarch.<sup>22</sup> More specifically, constitution eighteen notes that the tourmarch stationed with the *strategos* was formerly known as the *hypostrategos*, and is now called the merarch.<sup>23</sup> The merarch, then, is really two things in the *Taktika*. The same word is used in definitions of the tourmarch’s role when reference to the *Strategikon* is explicit, and for a particular type of tourmarch, senior by virtue of proximity to the *strategos* and identified with the *hypostrategos*.

That merarchs and tourmarchs would have been understood as fulfilling a similar function in military contexts is suggested by two traditions relating to the battle of Lalakaon of September 863. Theophanes Continuatus identifies the unnamed officer as “ὁ τοῦ Χαρσιανοῦ κλεισουράρχης.”<sup>24</sup> Genesios, however, provides a fuller narrative of events and identifies the officer as “μεράρχης ὁ Μαχαιρᾶς οὕτω καλούμενος.”<sup>25</sup> There is no indication that Machairas was merarch of Charsianon, but rather that the son of Umar al-Aqta, the emir of Melitene, encountered the merarch “ἐν τῷ Χαρσιανοῦ θέματι.”<sup>26</sup> Genesios and the continuator of George the Monk also include a pun on the officer’s name: the emir was killed “μαχαίρα.”<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, “μεράρχης” and “Μαχαιρᾶς,” presented by the sources in apposition, are phonetically very close. For these reasons, I am inclined to see the use of merarch here as rhetorical. *Kleisourarchs* and tourmarchs could fulfill similar functions in the military organization of the Byzantine frontier (see, e.g., the Armenian M’leh, discussed below), though the

16 Ibid., 4§67.276–77; cf. *Das Strategikon des Maurikios*, ed. G. T. Dennis, trans. E. Gamillscheg, CFHB 17 (Vienna, 1981), 12.B.8.25.

17 *Taktika*, 4§45.182–84; cf. *Strategikon*, 1.4.14–15.

18 *Taktika*, 12§68.509–10; cf. *Strategikon*, 3.14.25–26.

19 See also *Strategikon*, 1.2.8–9, 1.9.34, 12.B.11.19, and 12.B.22.29.

20 *Taktika*, 6§16.84–85 and *Strategikon*, 1.2.80–82; *Taktika*, 12§48.353–55 and *Strategikon*, 2.14.5–8; *Taktika*, 12§82.590–91; cf. *Strategikon*, 7.B.16.9–10. Except for minor wording and verb changes, the only difference between these passages is the tourmarch/merarch substitution.

21 Haldon, *Commentary*, 39–55. Not to mention the motives for the *Taktika*’s composition: “it . . . embodies a late ninth-century interest in rediscovering the roots of the east Roman state, and in reasserting the identity of the eastern empire as the ‘real’ Roman state”; *ibid.*, 37.

22 *Taktika*, 4§§45–46, 12§61.457–58.

23 Ibid., 18§140.741–42.

24 *PmbZ*, no. 4656; I. Bekker, ed., *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus* (Bonn, 1838), 183.8–9.

25 *Iosephi Genesii Regum libri quattuor*, ed. A. Lesmueller-Werner and I. Thurn (Berlin and New York, 1978), 68.33–69.34. The continuator of George the Monk names Machairas, but does not include his office: V. M. Istrin, *Knigy vremennyya i obraznyia Georgija Mnicha. Chronika Georgija Amartola v drevnem slavjanorusskom perevode. Tekst, izsledovanie i slovar* (Petrograd, 1920–30), 2:9.28.

26 For the status of Charsianon, see F. Hild and M. Restle, *Kappadokien (Kappadokia, Charsianon, Sebasteia und Lykandos)*, TIB 2 (Vienna, 1981), 164, and V. Vlysidou et al., *Η Μικρά Ασία των Θεμάτων: έρευνες πάνω στην γεωγραφική φυσιογνωμία και προσωπογραφία των Βυζαντινών Θεμάτων της Μικράς Ασίας (7<sup>ος</sup>–11<sup>ος</sup> αι.)* (Athens, 1998), 300.

27 Genesios 68.29 and Istrin, *Chronika Georgija Amartola*, 2:9.25–26.



former was more regular. However, what these two traditions reveal is that during a period of expansion along the eastern frontier, when kleisourarchs and tourmarchs stationed there could have overlapping roles, merarch could be substituted into the text. This does not mean, however, that the offices of tourmarch and merarch were identical, but instead that in certain (military) contexts, their functions would have been similar enough to be indistinguishable. Such is the impression we get from the *Taktika*.

Apart from the *Taktika* and this brief mention in the historical sources, the most important evidence for merarchs in the tenth century is the compendium of documents compiled by Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos's circle, the *De cerimoniis*. Merarchs appear in the *De cerimoniis* in four contexts: the list of officers present at Leo VI's first haircut,<sup>28</sup> the officers subordinate to the strategos in the *Kleterologion* of Philotheos,<sup>29</sup> the third treatise on imperial expeditions,<sup>30</sup> and the list of officers participating in the 949 expedition to Crete.<sup>31</sup> In each of these documents, the merarch follows (directly, in all but one passage) tourmarchs in the listing of officers.<sup>32</sup> The merarch seems to have ranked behind the tourmarchs: when the emperor gives gifts to officers, the merarch,

together with the *komes tes kortes* and the *domestikos* of the theme, receives a lower-value gift than those given to the tourmarchs.<sup>33</sup>

The traditional interpretation of the merarch's lower rank relative to the tourmarch in the *De cerimoniis* and the third treatise on imperial expeditions, even though he is traditionally defined as the "senior tourmarch" within the theme, is that he may have been on the strategos's immediate staff, one of the *proeleusimaioi*.<sup>34</sup> He would have been in company with the *komes tes kortes* and the *domestikos* of the theme, as well as several other officers.<sup>35</sup>

The sigillographic evidence provides indirect support for this interpretation. Surprisingly few seals of merarchs survive, including four or five specimens in the Dumbarton Oaks and Fogg Museum collections, a number comparable to the six preserved for komites tes kortes from the same period (tenth and eleventh centuries).<sup>36</sup> Other examples are from Corinth, Antioch, and, possibly, Knossos.<sup>37</sup> All seals

28 Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *De cerimoniis*, trans. A. Moffatt and M. Tall, *The Book of Ceremonies: With the Greek Edition of the Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae* (Bonn, 1829), ByzAus 18 (Canberra, 2012), 622.

29 Oikonomides, *Listes*, 109.19.

30 Constantine Porphyrogenitus: *Three Treatises on Imperial Military Expeditions*, ed. and trans. J. F. Haldon, CFHB 28 (Vienna, 1990), 94–151, esp. 122.447 and 126.504, 509 (hereafter *CPTT*).

31 J. F. Haldon, "Theory and Practice in Tenth-Century Military Administration: Chapters II, 44 and 45 of the *Book of Ceremonies*," *TM* 13 (2000): 217.193, 201.

32 *CPTT*, 122.445–50 and 123. In this passage, the *droungarokomites* appear between the tourmarchs and merarch in the listing of thematic officers that greet the emperor as he passes through the theme. Notably, the *protonotarios* of the theme appears between the strategos and the tourmarchs. On the *droungarokomites*, see Haldon, "Theory and Practice," 322–29. The *droungarokomites* combined the functions of the *droungarios*, in charge of the *droungos*, and the *komes*, in charge of a *bandon*; the last of these military units corresponded as well to a territory with set boundaries, so the *droungarokomites* could have been an administrator analogous to the tourmarch for a tourma. It is possible, then, that this listing of thematic military officers mixes two groups: the strategos and his retinue, which included the *protonotarios* and the merarch, and his subordinate administrators, the tourmarchs and *droungarokomites*.

33 *CPTT*, 126.501–6 (for the Roman themes) and 506–11 (for the Armenian themes); for the distinction between garments from imperial workshops and those bought on the market, see *ibid.*, 110.250–60 and 112.289–95, and Moffatt and Tall, *Book of Ceremonies*, xxxvi–xxxvii.

34 *Ibid.*, 250. The earliest reference to merarchs seems to be *De cerimoniis*, 622, on Leo VI's first haircut, a document dating to ca. 866–70. The extent to which this document may have been updated by Constantine VII's circle to reflect current terminology, however, should dissuade us from treating this as a *terminus post quem*.

35 Haldon, *Commentary*, 158–59; Oikonomides, *Listes* 109.16–111.5.

36 Merarchs: BZS.1951.31.5.1992 (Michael); BZS.1955.1.3419 (Michael Zaras); BZS.1951.31.51822 (Eudokimos), and BZS.1958.106.2012 (Sergios, merarch of Hellas; *DOSeals* 2: no. 8.31); BZS.1951.31.5.2059 (Stephen) could belong to a merarch or tourmarch, and the identification here is left open. A sixth, BZS.1951.31.5.3397, provisionally identified in *DOSeals* 5: no. 119.1 as belonging to Michael Charsianites or to an officer of Charsianon named Michael, likely does not belong to a merarch, as the second letter after the mu appears to be an upsilon. In addition to the six seals of komites tes kortes from the late ninth through eleventh centuries in the Dumbarton Oaks and Fogg Museum collections, there are thirteen other specimens dating from the seventh through ninth centuries.

37 See Haldon, *Commentary*, 148, and an unedited seal in the Thierry collection belonging to Niketas, merarch of Antioch (mid-eleventh century), which includes a bust of St. Nicholas on the obverse. Many thanks to an anonymous reader for this information. The seal of a merarch of Antioch, at the same time as tourmarchs are attested in the region (at least one of whom was under the authority of the *katepano* of Antioch), suggests that whatever role the merarch had on the strategos's staff, he could also exercise under a *doux* or

of merarchs date from the late ninth to early twelfth centuries, and so parallel the appearance of the office in written sources.<sup>38</sup> As a member of the strategos's staff, however, one would expect merarchs to be attested on seals during the same period as other proeleusimaioi. Komites tes kortes are attested from the seventh until the eleventh century.<sup>39</sup>

There seem to be three possible explanations. First, merarch could have been a new term for an existing office, tourmarch, a deliberate archaism that caught on in a limited way beginning in the tenth century. An analogous example is the use of the classicizing *chiliarch* as a synonym for *taxiarch*, the commander of a thousand-man infantry unit.<sup>40</sup> However, unlike chiliarch/taxiarch, tourmarch and merarch appear side by side both in documents produced during the reign of Constantine VII and in later fiscal exemption lists. The *Taktika* makes it clear, as we have seen, that tourmarch and merarch, though related, were discrete offices. This is further demonstrated by two seals belonging to a certain Eudokimos (figs. 2 and 3), who served first as tourmarch and subsequently as merarch in the first half of the eleventh century.<sup>41</sup>

katepano. On the organization of the *doukaton* of Antioch, see Holmes, *Basil II* (n. 8 above), 330–60. Tourmarchs in northern Syria in 1032: I. Kratchkovsky, F. Micheau, and G. Troupeau, *Histoire de Yahya ibn Sa'id d'Antioche*, PO 47, no. 4 (Turnhout, 1997), 520 and 524. The officers are identified as *ṭarāmīḥa* (sing. *turmūḥ*), an Arabic transcription of the Greek word: *ibid.*, 520 n. 32.

38 The seal of Sergios, merarch of Hellas is dated by the editors of *DOSeals* 2 with reservations to the ninth/tenth century based on an unusual form of the alpha (4), found in manuscripts and graffiti from the late 9th and 10th centuries; *DOSeals* 2: no. 8.31.

39 Two references in the Cadaster of Thebes: Strategios, komes tes kortes (late tenth/early eleventh century, before 1025) and Theophanes, spatharokandidatos and komes tes kortes (early eleventh century, ca. 1025); N. Svoronos, "Recherches sur le cadastre byzantin et la fiscalité aux XI<sup>e</sup> et XII<sup>e</sup> siècles: Le cadastre de Thèbes," *BCH* 83 (1955), 13 (AIIc1), and 18 (BVf12) (Strategios), and 16 (BVf1) (Theophanes). Both were landowners 2 or 3 generations before the generation contemporary to the cadaster as it survives.

40 E. McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth: Byzantine Warfare in the Tenth Century*, DOS 33 (Washington, DC, 1995), 203. Taxiarch as commander of a 1,000-man unit is first attested in the mid-tenth-century *Praecepta militaria*. In the classical tacticians, a chiliarch commands a *chiliarchy* of 1,024 men, while a taxiarch is a separate, lower-ranking officer responsible for a *taxis* of 128 men: Asklepiodotos, *Techne taktike*, 2.8, 10; Arrian, *Techne taktike*, 9.2 and 10.5; and Aelian, *Tactica theoria*, 9.3, 6 (n. 12 above).

41 BZS.1951.31.5.1322 (tourmarch) and BZS.1951.31.5.1822 (merarch). The seals date to the first half of the eleventh century,

Second, it is possible that merarch was a new office, meeting a specialized need of the strategos, perhaps on an ad hoc basis, thus explaining the office's rare appearance on seals. The *Taktika* and other manuals could have included this office in various prescriptions, giving the impression that it was more institutionalized or regularized than was really the case. As others have shown, many of documents we rely on for ninth- and tenth-century administrative history were themselves singular products, whether seating charts for specific feasts or documents relating to individual events.<sup>42</sup>

Third, it may have been an office of long standing, about which written sources and seals are silent until the end of the ninth century. By comparison, the relatively rare appearance of the komes tes kortes in written sources and on seals, albeit over the course of four centuries, seems to support this. Furthermore, the fact that there are so few preserved seals for both offices suggests either that the officers themselves rarely sent correspondence, at least relative to strategoi, tourmarchs, and judges, or that they were active officers only occasionally, when the strategos was on campaign. The komes tes kortes was in charge of the strategos's tent and security arrangements, duties that took place during campaigns away from the thematic capital, and so we could suggest that the role of merarchs was similarly confined to campaigning and leadership on the battlefield.

Contrary to this view, some scholars cite the seal belonging to Constantine, merarch of Knossos, as evidence that merarchs might have had administrative

ca. 1020–50, with the tourmarch seal dating earlier in this period than the merarch one, indicating that Eudokimos was promoted from tourmarch to merarch. Both seals depict, on the obverse, a bust of St. Nicholas. BZS.1951.31.5.1322 has a parallel in Laurent, *Orghidan*, no. 345 (n. 3 above), and has the following inscription on the reverse: +ΕΥΔΟ|ΚΙΜ,ΤΡ8|ΜΑΡΧ,ΟΕ|ΠΙΓ,ΚΛ—Εὐδόκιμο(ς) τρουμάρχ(ης) ὁ ἐπὶ Γ... κλ... The reverse of BZS.1951.31.5.1822 reads: ΕΥΔΟΚΙ|ΜΟ,ΜΕΡΙ|ΑΡΧ,ΟΕΠΙ|ΓΙΓΓΛ—Εὐδόκιμο(ς) μεριάρχ(ης) ὁ ἐπὶ Γγγλ... The surname is uncertain. W. Seibt has suggested that the inscription should read ὁ ἐπὶ Γγκλ(αρίου) or Γγγλ(αρίου), and that the official should be connected with Ginklarion (Γγκλάριον, with alternate spelling Γγγλάριον), a location in Pisidia mentioned in Niketas Choniates; see *Nicetae Choniatae Historia*, ed. J. A. van Dieten (Berlin and New York, 1975), 413.42, and K. Belke and R. Mersich, *Phrygien und Pisidien*, TIB 7 (Vienna, 1990), 260.

42 F. Winkelmann, *Byzantinische Rang- und Ämterstruktur im 8. und 9. Jahrhundert. Faktoren und Tendenzen ihrer Entwicklung* (Berlin, 1985), 28.



FIG. 2 Eudokimos ὁ ἐπὶ Γ . . . κλ . . . , tourmarch (first half of eleventh century, ca. 1020–50), BZS.1951.31.5.1322 (Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Bequest of Thomas Whittemore)



FIG. 3 Eudokimos ὁ ἐπὶ Γγγλ . . . , merarch (first half of eleventh century, ca. 1020–50), BZS.1951.31.5.1822 (Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Bequest of Thomas Whittemore)

authority over a particular region.<sup>43</sup> After Nikephoros Phokas's reconquest of the island in 961, Crete became the seat of a strategos until the end of the eleventh century. The island was subdivided into several *tourmai*, and the Latin *turma* persisted in documents during Venetian rule.<sup>44</sup> If the seal of Constantine does belong

to a merarch, this would attest a *tourma* of Knossos and would be the only evidence for an officer in charge of a *tourma* on Crete.

The presence of St. Myron, the local saint of Knossos and only otherwise depicted on seals belonging to bishops, however, supports Vitalien Laurent's suggestion that we should read **HEPEAPX** rather than **MEPEAPX**, and thus that the seal should belong to an ecclesiastical official.<sup>45</sup> The depiction of a local saint on the seal of a fiscal or military official would be irregular.<sup>46</sup> If this seal belongs to a merarch, according to Jean-Claude Cheynet and Cécile Morrisson, Constantine may have been a local promoted to merarch of his home region.<sup>47</sup> Such a promotion may reflect the continuation of a high level of political independence on Crete, noted for earlier periods and, after 961, indicated by the strategos's retention of a degree of administrative control that elsewhere passed to *kritai*.<sup>48</sup>

Accommodation of local circumstances and elites is well attested in the tenth and eleventh centuries.<sup>49</sup> A well-known example is that of the Armenian M'leh. Melias/M'leh belonged to one of the lesser *nakhharar* clans and served as an imperial client in the late ninth

43 Schlumberger, *Sigillographie*, 201–2 and D. Tsougarakis, "The Byzantine Seals of Crete," *SBS* 2 (1990): 141 and 151, no. 56. For the use of this seal to argue for merarchs' possession of administrative authority, see *CPTT*, 249 and Oikonomides, *Listes*, 108 n. 65.

44 D. Tsougarakis, *Byzantine Crete: From the 5th Century to the Venetian Conquest* (Athens, 1988), 186–90. For the idiosyncratic administrative history of Crete, see *ibid.*, 164–78; E. Malamut, *Les îles de l'Empire byzantin, VIII<sup>e</sup>–XII<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris, 1988), 1:297–335; I. Touratsoglou, I. Koltsida-Makre, and Y. Nikolaou, "New Lead Seals from Crete," *SBS* 9 (2006): 49–68; A. Dunn, "A Byzantine Fiscal Official's Seal from Knossos Excavations and the Archaeology of Dark-Age Cities," in *Crete Romana e Protobizantina: Atti del congresso internazionale (Iraklion, 23–30 settembre 2000)* (Padua, 2004), 1:138–46. Eustathios of Thessalonike attributed the words *τόρμα* and *τορμαρχης* to the Cretan dialect; *Commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem pertinentes*, ed. M. van der Valk (Leiden, 1971–87), 2:179–80, and *Commentarii ad Homeri Odysseam*, ed. G. Stallbaum (Leipzig, 1825–26), 1:316.

45 Laurent, *Corpus*, 5:624 (n. 3 above). Many thanks to an anonymous reader for this reference. Seals depicting St. Myron: George, bishop of Arkadia (eleventh/twelfth century); Constantine, bishop of Knossos (not certain, but probable) (end of tenth century); and Nikephoros, bishop of Knossos (eleventh century, first half). For references, see D. Tsougarakis, "The Byzantine Seals of Crete," *SBS* 2 (1990): 145, nos. 6, 7, and 9.

46 J. Cotsonis, "Saints and Cult Centers: A Geographic and Administrative Perspective in Light of Byzantine Lead Seals," *SBS* 8 (2003): 26, notes that "seals exhibit little or no association with the local cults on the part of the military and civil officials of a region in contrast to the ecclesiastical officials who appear to be more connected to their metropolitanates and to the needs of the local inhabitants. The lack of iconographic congruence between the ecclesiastical, civil and military bureaucracies within a particular region reflects the absence of any indigenous coherence between these provincial structures of authority."

47 J.-C. Cheynet and C. Morrisson, "Texte et image sur les sceaux byzantins. Les raisons d'un choix iconographique," *SBS* 4 (1995): 26.

48 Earlier periods: Touratsoglou, Koltsida-Makre, and Nikolaou, "New Lead Seals," 66, and D. Tsougarakis, "The Byzantine Seals of Crete," *SBS* 2 (1990): 141–42, both in reference to the persistence, into the ninth century, of the *archontia*. After 961: Malamut, *Îles*, 322. The seal of Theophanes asekretis, judge of Crete and the Cyclades (tenth/eleventh century) (*DOSeals* 2: no. 42.4), attests to the presence of the new administration in the region.

49 C. Holmes, *Basil II*, esp. chaps. 6 and 7, emphasizes that this was particularly the case with civil governance, in both the East and West.



century, both in the Balkans and on the eastern frontier. After 896, M'leh established an autonomous lordship in the hills west of Melitene; his appointment around 908 as tourmarch of Euphrateia, Trypia, and the Desert (εἰς τὴν ἐρημίαν), and, subsequently, as kleisourarch and strategos of Lykandos by Leo VI, provided imperial confirmation for this local reality.<sup>50</sup> A similar situation may be attested by the tenth/eleventh-century seal of Euphemios, who served as tourmarch and kleisourarch of Taron,<sup>51</sup> as well as the forty-seven lesser and twenty-two greater tourmarchs of the Charpezikion theme, mentioned among those participating in the 949 expedition to Crete.<sup>52</sup> If Constantine was a merarch, and if Cheynet and Morrisson's argument is correct, then his seal demonstrates that the office of merarch could be deployed in a similar way as tourmarch to integrate local notables into the imperial hierarchy.

These examples show that, from the mid-tenth century, tourmarch could be used in different ways than those envisioned by the *Taktika* and other documents produced at the court, at least on the empire's frontiers in the face of both local realities and the diverse organizational needs. A similar picture emerges when we consider the office and its duties and authority in light of toponymy on seals.

### The Duties and Authority of Tourmarchs

What were the duties of the tourmarchs? The *Taktika* shows that during campaigns they were the senior subordinate officers under the strategos, in charge of coordinating their units in tactical maneuvers. In the *De velitatione*, tourmarchs are, with one exception,<sup>53</sup> the

only named officers on the staff of the strategos (all others referred to collectively as *archontes*) and, as in the *Taktika*, charged with a set of duties that include advising the strategos and potentially leading units of soldiers that can either operate independently or coordinate in skirmishing tactics.<sup>54</sup> Tourmarchs could also maintain order locally. In 932, Elephantinos, tourmarch of the Opsikion, captured Basil, who was pretending to be the earlier rebel Andronikos Doukas, and anonymous tourmarchs were sent by Niketas, the *katepano* of Antioch, in early 1032 to quell a movement of Druze causing disorder in the countryside.<sup>55</sup> They were also responsible for maintaining fortifications: an inscription found on the fortification system of Philippi identifies the tourmarch Leo, alongside the strategos Romanos, as having directed work on the fortifications between 963 and 969.<sup>56</sup> Finally, in the *De administrando imperio*, we find that tourmarchs might be among those officials dispatched on ad hoc tasks of imperial interest, in this case, taking up quarters in and keeping watch over a city (Ketzeon) in a frontier region.<sup>57</sup>

The obligations of tourmarchs, then, were a mixture of prescribed and ad hoc duties. The suitability of tourmarchs for each of these duties, though, depended on the nature of their authority. As with all officers, authority came from the emperor: the Iberian ruler of Ketzeon wanted the emperor to send him a "tourmarch or some other imperial agent." The role of imperial representative is, in fact, one of the oldest attested for tourmarchs: Justinian II sent the tourmarch Christopher to Cherson in 711.

Military authority is what is most emphasized in the written sources, but these sources all date to within one hundred and fifty years of each other, and so are very much products of the expectations and circumstances of their times. Seals, however, show that the

50 *PmbZ*, no. 25041. M'leh's descendants continued to hold military offices in the region into the eleventh century: G. Dédéyan, "Mleh le Grand, stratège de Lykandos," *REArm*, n.s., 15 (1981): 101–2.

51 BZS.1951.31.5.839; *DOSeals* 4: no. 76.4. The reading of the place-name is uncertain. The first letter is not visible, while the second, identified by the editors of *DOSeals* 4 as an alpha, could also be an epsilon.

52 Haldon, "Theory and Practice," 217.193–94, 221.60–61, and 223.93–94; Oikonomides, *Listes*, 345–46. Oikonomides notes that new themes from the 940s and 950s in the East, and the ones formed later in the tenth century in the West, had a relatively large number of officers, and refers to the tourmarchs who appear in the documents from southern Italy. See below.

53 Topoteretes, a commander of a *topoteresia* in the thematic army (rather than the second-in-command to a tagmatic domestikos) is included in *De velitatione*, 10.12: Καὶ διαχωρισάτω εἴτε τουρμάρχη

εἴτε τοποτηρητὴν; G. Dagron and H. Mihăescu, ed. and trans., *Le Traité sur la guérilla (De velitatione) de l'Empereur Nicéphore Phocas (963–969)* (Paris, 1986), 69.93–94 and n. 18.

54 *Ibid.*, 177–93 for an analysis of the text.

55 Elephantinos: *PmbZ*, no. 21635; Anonymous tourmarchs: *Histoire de Yahya* (n. 37 above), 520, and *EP*, s.v. "Durüz."

56 P. Lemerle, "Le château de Philippos au temps de Nicéphore Phocas," *BCH* 61 (1937): 103–8: ἐπιστὰ(τοῦντος) Λέωντος τουρμάρχ(ου) τοῦ . . .; *PmbZ*, no. 24513.

57 Constantine Porphyrogenetos, *De administrando imperio*, ed. G. Moravcsik, trans. R. J. H. Jenkins, new rev. ed. (Washington, DC, 1985), 208.





FIG. 4 Samuel, imperial spatharokandidatos and tourmarch of the phoideratoi (ninth/tenth century), BZS.1955.1.2834 (Dumbarton Oaks, Byzantine Collection, Washington, DC)

office of tourmarch existed from the seventh through the eleventh centuries. These seals may provide evidence of long-term trends that could reveal more about the nature of the tourmarch's authority. One way to approach this question is by looking at the frequency of toponymy on seals; that is, how often did officers include the name of the place (or unit) over which they exercised authority on their seals?

From a corpus of approximately 196 individual tourmarchs,<sup>58</sup> 110 (56.1%) used seals that include the name of a place or a unit (e.g., *phoideratoi*, fleet; fig. 4); eighty-two (41.8%) do not include this information. On another four seals (2.0%), it is uncertain whether the final portion of the inscription is for a place or family name. The numbers become more striking when grouped chronologically, and normalizing the dating of seals reveals a clear trend (figs. 5 and 6).<sup>59</sup> Until about the second half of the eighth century, and more specifically toward the end of the century, atonymic seals outnumber those that include a place or unit name (figs. 7 and 8). From the turn of the ninth century, that ratio decreases rapidly, so that by the end of the ninth century over three-quarters of seals include a place or

unit name. From the end of the tenth century, however, this trend reverses, with only half of seals dated from about the second half of the tenth to the end of the eleventh century including some indicator of the tourmarch's circumscription (figs. 9 and 10).

How can we interpret this evidence? Tourmarch was an office of long standing, with significant numbers of seals attesting to the appearance of the office by the beginning of the eighth century. The late eighth/early ninth century, however, represents a watershed. We can see a similar trend with the office of strategos (fig. 11). Here, however, the change occurs at an earlier period, with nearly two-thirds of seals dating to the eighth century already including the names of the themes; by the ninth century, the percentage of toponymous seals is 95.7%. The reign of Leo III marked an important stage in the evolution of the themes as territorial circumscriptions, with their official employment as administrative circumscriptions coming into general use in the first few decades of the ninth century, a change associated by Leslie Brubaker and John Haldon with the policies of Nikephoros I.<sup>60</sup> The process that led, in the middle of the eighth century, to the strategoi associating their office on their seals more systematically to their themes occurred slightly later for the tourmarchs. A reasonable explanation for the chronological disparity in the emergence of place-names can be found by separating the territorialization of the themes, on the one hand, from their development of administrative characteristics, on the other. The first change seems to have affected, in any significant way, only the seals of strategoi, while the second decreased the incidence of atonymy on the seals of both officers.

The appearance of a place-name on seals, then, may reflect a period when strategoi and tourmarchs, hitherto primarily military officers, were able to exercise some form of administrative authority alongside (and occasionally against) other civil officials. This authority was military as well as civil from the first

58 The number is approximate because it is not always clear, from seals, whether seals belonged to the same or different individuals, especially when there are common first names and titles. In addition, it is important to note that these 196 individuals do not mean we have 196 seals; in some cases, there are 2 or 3 parallel specimens.

59 To normalize the dating of the seals, I created half-century periods. I distributed seals spanning these divisions between multiple half-century periods. For example, for one toponymic seal and one atonymic seal dating to the tenth century, one-half of a toponymic and one-half of an atonymic seal were assigned to the first half of the tenth century, and the same to the second half. This method allows the comparison, across equal time spans, of seals that are dated to broader or narrower time spans according to various criteria, not least of which is the personal preference of the sigillographer.

60 J.-C. Cheynet, "La mise en place des thèmes d'après les sceaux: Les stratèges," *SBS* 10 (2010): 1–13, esp. 12–13, and L. Brubaker and J. F. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era, c. 680–850: A History* (Cambridge, 2011), 723–71, esp. 724–34, for changes under Leo III, and 744–55, for the transformation under Nikephoros I. The five criteria differentiating a theme from a *strategis* (i.e., a simple command and its territory) are defined at *ibid.*, 752–53. See also C. Zuckermann, "Learning from the Enemy and More: Studies in 'Dark Centuries' Byzantium," *Millennium* 2 (2005): 79–135.

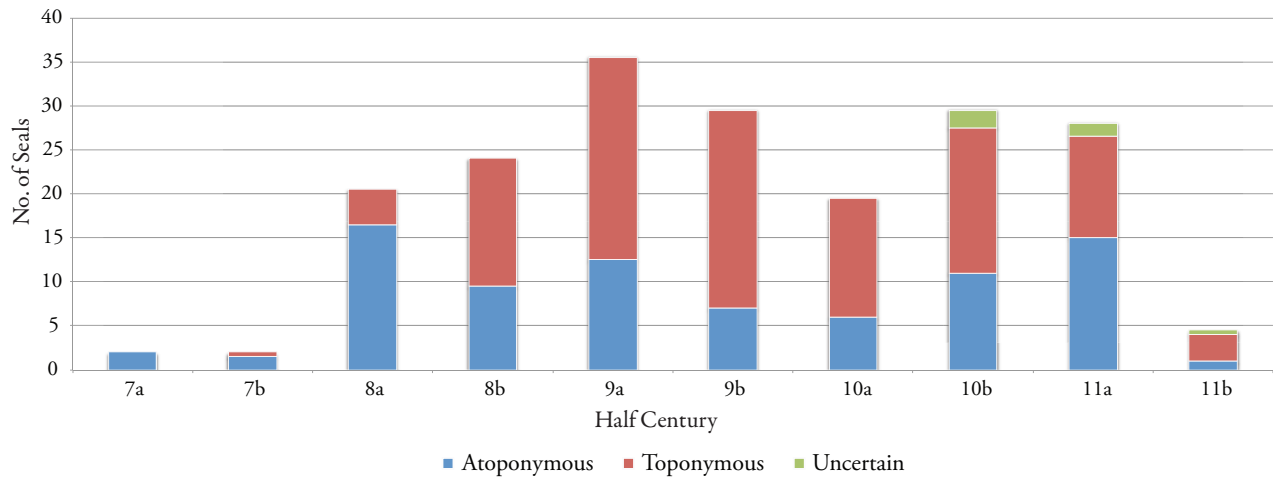


FIG. 5 Seals of tourmarchs, normalized distribution by half century (chart by author)

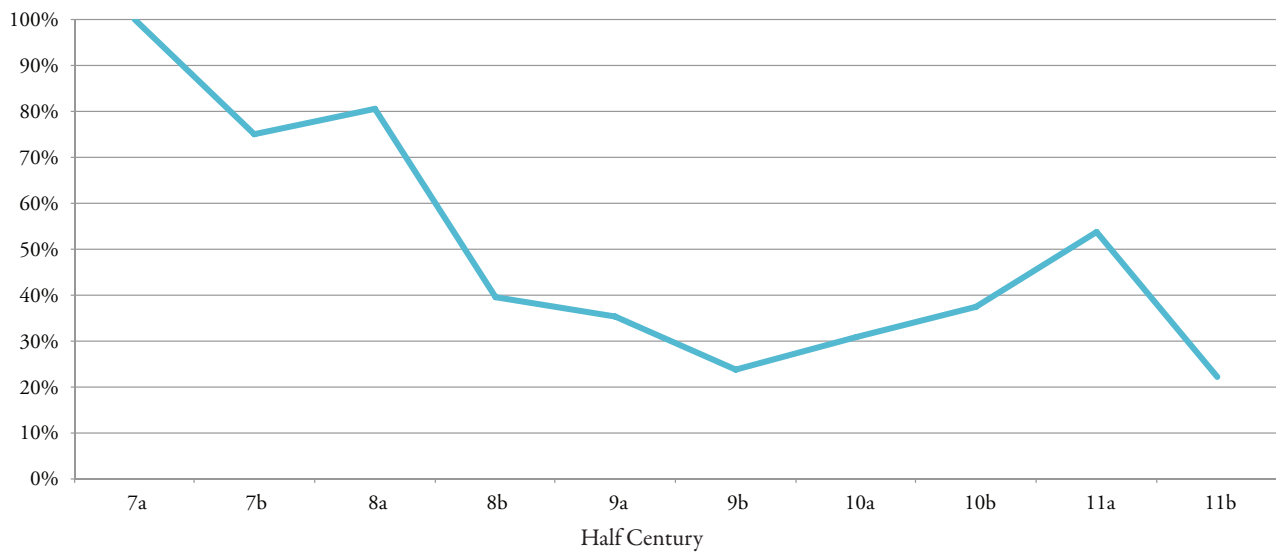


FIG. 6 Percentage of atonymic seals of tourmarchs, normalized by half century (chart by author)



FIG. 7 Andrew, imperial strator and tourmarch (eighth century), BZS.1958.106.4752 (Dumbarton Oaks, Byzantine Collection, Washington, DC)



FIG. 8 Marinos, hypatos and tourmarch (eighth/ninth century), BZS.1955.1.1037 (Dumbarton Oaks, Byzantine Collection, Washington, DC)



FIG. 9 Stephen, imperial spatharokandidatos and tourmarch (late tenth/early eleventh century), BZS.1947.2.287 (Dumbarton Oaks, Byzantine Collection, Washington, DC)



FIG. 10 Leo, imperial spatharokandidatos and tourmarch (late tenth/early eleventh century), BZS.1955.1.4495 (Dumbarton Oaks, Byzantine Collection, Washington, DC)

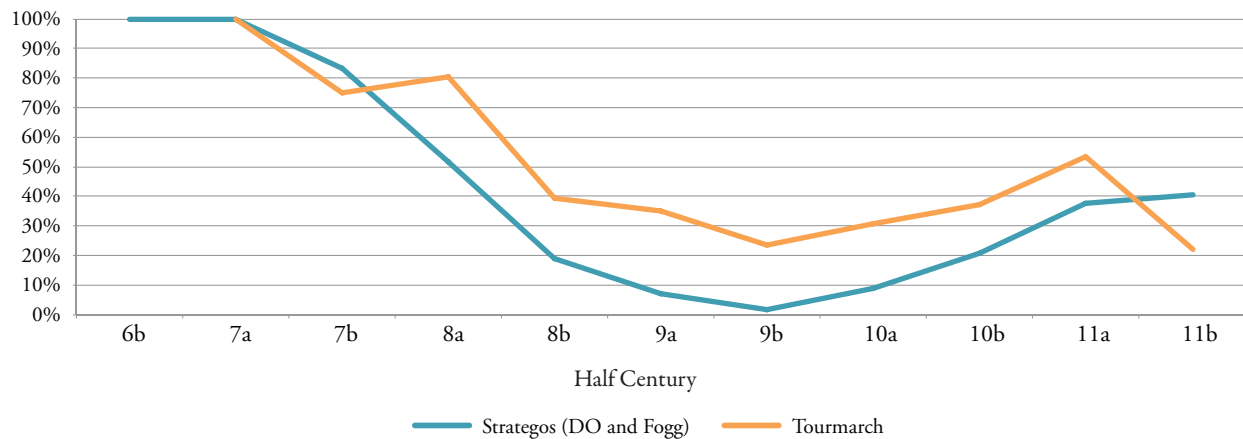


FIG. 11 Percentage of atonymic seals of tourmarchs and strategoi (DO and Fogg corpus), normalized distribution by half century (chart by author)

decades of the ninth until the middle of the tenth century, although what exercise of this authority constituted is unclear.<sup>61</sup> The *De velitatione* states that the strategos's authority to judge his men and administer the theme, in collaboration with the judge, the protonotarios, and other functionaries, comes from "the most ancient Romans and from the law" (*ἀπὸ τῶν ἀρχαιοτάτων Ῥωμαίων καὶ τοῦ νόμου*), and that the tourmarch has the authority to judge in his tourma

according to the regulations in force and their prerogatives.<sup>62</sup> Although the passage is problematic, what

61 H. Glykatzis-Ahrweiler, "Recherches sur l'administration de l'empire byzantine au IX<sup>e</sup>–XI<sup>e</sup> siècles," *BCH* 84 (1960): 43–44; Dagron and Mihăescu, *Traité sur la guérilla*, 269–72; Brubaker and Haldon, *Iconoclast Era*, 769–70: "While it is clear . . . that the *strategos* was the chief imperial official his theme, his civil authority remained mostly supervisory and delegated, and the entirely military nature of his command establishment in the later ninth century implies an originally entirely military function, even if in practice his authority was more extended than this at times."

62 Dagron and Mihăescu, *Traité sur la guérilla*, 111.47, 51–53, and n. 15. This follows a passage (110.40–42) where the author describes the dishonor shown to soldiers by the thematic judges. This "polemical outburst," and the version of the *De velitatione* that is preserved, may have been one part of a propaganda initiative by the Phokas family during the reign of either John Tzimiskes or Basil II, when the family was out of favor; see C. Holmes, "Byzantine Political Culture and Compilation Literature in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries: Some Preliminary Inquiries," *DOP* 64 (2010): 74–75. In this interpretation, the invective against fiscal and judicial officials says more about the frustrations of members of the Phokas family, especially regarding military leadership and objectives on the eastern frontier, than it does about changes in the provincial administration per se. Although Haldon acknowledges doubts surrounding the context and polemical purposes of this passage, he notes that the Justinianic and earlier regulations are clear on the jurisdiction of military courts over active soldiers, as well as their immediate families and dependents, and that "there is no reason to doubt that [these regulations]

it does reveal when read alongside other sources is the changing landscape of provincial administration in the mid-tenth century as the thematic judge (*krites*) became head of the civil administration.<sup>63</sup>

The importance of the thematic judge emphasizes the division of provincial civil and military authorities in the mid- to late tenth century and the decline of the thematic armies and the strategoi (and their subordinates) in the eleventh century.<sup>64</sup> The growth of toponymy on the seals of provincial military officials occurred at just this time and reinforces the relationship between toponymy on seals and a form of official, territorial authority, one that extends beyond military leadership. Atoponymous seals from the low point of the ninth century increase steadily to 30.8% in the first half of the tenth, plateauing around 43.5% from the second half of the tenth until the later eleventh. Ivan Jordanov's corpus of seals found in modern-day Bulgaria is important for what it reveals about the situation "on the ground" as opposed to what is preserved from the Constantinopolitan finds.<sup>65</sup> Eighteen or nineteen belong to tourmarchs, with the following percentages for toponymy: eighth/ninth—100%; ninth—0%; tenth—0%; tenth/eleventh—62.5 or 75%; and eleventh—75%. The percentages are uniformly higher during these periods in the Bulgarian materials, which may be explained in three ways. First, tourmarchs (and other officers) may have been less likely to

include the name of their geographic circumscription if they were writing to other locals. Second, the number of tourmarchs, at least from the late tenth and eleventh centuries, may have been greater than the published material suggests; their correspondence may have circulated only very locally, and so we depend on excavation or stray finds to reveal their true numbers. Of the published materials, the Bulgarian seals represent one-third of tourmarchs' seals from the tenth/eleventh century and about one-quarter from the eleventh century. Third, the regular thematic structures revealed by the *Taktika* and other sources, with three tourmarchs to a theme, may have given way, by the late tenth century, to different, ad hoc arrangements in different parts of the empire. While a combination of all these is probably correct, nevertheless the third explanation best accounts for the system of provincial administration in place from the mid-tenth through the eleventh century.

### The Social Profile of Tourmarchs

We can, therefore, see a change in the nature of the tourmarch's authority, from military to military and administrative, from the beginning of the ninth century, with a reversion by the middle or late tenth century. What, if anything, can be said about the officers' social profile during this period?<sup>66</sup>

Very few explicit statements on the social profile of tourmarchs can be found in the sources. The *Taktika* states that tourmarchs should be "men of good judgment, disciplined, virtuous, experienced and, if possible, able to read and write."<sup>67</sup> The ability to read and write is particularly important for the hypostrategos and distinguishes tourmarchs from *moirarchs*.<sup>68</sup> Theodore of Stoudios, in a letter to an unnamed komes, rhetorically praises the addressee for his character: he does not rejoice too greatly in his recent promotion, because even the office of tourmarch would not have been too good for him.<sup>69</sup> Ibn Hawkal, in

remained in force throughout the period from the late sixth century onwards." See Brubaker and Haldon, *Iconoclast Era*, 768 and n. 144, and J. F. Haldon, *Byzantine Praetorians: An Administrative, Institutional and Social Survey of the Opsikion and Tagmata*, c. 580–900 (Bonn, 1984), 305–6.

63 Glykatzi-Ahrweiler, "Recherches," 68–71. Indeed, a judge could even assume the role of the strategos, as did the *krites* of Hellas during the preparations for the expedition to Crete under Leo VI: see *ibid.*, 68 and n. 6.

64 These divisions were not always respected. In the middle of the eleventh century, the tourmarch of Haplokonesos attempted to usurp the judicial prerogatives of the *basilikos* of Madyta: K. N. Sathas, *Μεσαιωνική Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 5, *Μιχαήλ Ψελλοῦ ἱστορικοὶ λόγοι, ἐπιστολαὶ καὶ ἄλλα ἀνέκδοτα* (Paris, 1876), *Ep.* 165 and 192; E. Kurtz and F. Drexler, *Michaelis Pselli Scripta minora* (Milan, 1941), 2: *Ep.* 64; and H. Saradi, "The Byzantine Tribunals: Problems in the Application of Justice and State Policy (9th–12th c.)," *REB* 53 (1995): 171.

65 Approximately 80% of seals found in the provinces originated from the province in which they were found; see J.-C. Cheynet and C. Morrisson, "Lieux de trouvaille et circulation des sceaux," *SBS* 2 (1990): 105–36, esp. 116.

66 For the eighth and ninth centuries, see Brubaker and Haldon, *Iconoclast Era*, 571–624, and, for the late tenth through twelfth centuries, see J.-C. Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance (963–1210)* (Paris, 1990).

67 *Taktika*, 4§45.185–86.

68 *Ibid.*, 4§44.179–80 and 4§45.186–87.

69 *Theodori Studitae Epistulae*, ed. G. Fatouros (Berlin and New York, 1992), 2: *Ep.* 160.16–17: "ἀλλ' ὡς ἔμαθον καὶ εἰς ἀρχὴν κομητᾶτος προήχθαι σε, ἐχάρην μὲν οὐ πολὺ (μικρὸν γὰρ τῇ εὐσεβείᾳ σου καὶ



the mid-tenth century, noted that tourmarchs were members of the aristocracy,<sup>70</sup> and the *vita* of Basil the Younger includes an anonymous Paphlagonian tourmarch, who is described as “a powerful man of great wealth” (τις ἀνὴρ δυνάστης πλούσιος σφόδρα), accompanied to Constantinople by his family and retinue.<sup>71</sup> Nikephoros, the husband of Maria the Younger, had an extensive household when he served as tourmarch of Bizye.<sup>72</sup> The legal documents show that tourmarchs could be significant local landholders, although the degree to which they integrated into local society, at least while active officers, is uncertain. Finally, tourmarchs are attested as founders and restorers of and donors to religious establishments (fig. 12).<sup>73</sup>

The context in which tourmarchs appear provides an indirect measurement for their social profile. Among the earliest officeholders were, significantly, a number of individuals who led rebellions: Agallianos (726/27), Andronikos and Theophilos (d. 793), and

Euphemios (826).<sup>74</sup> The last participants in a rebellion, Atzmoros and Balantios (919), were, characteristically for the shape of the office, in a subordinate position, first supporters of and later defectors from the cause of Leo Phokas.<sup>75</sup> By 1057, a tourmarch's subversive behavior extended only to interfering with the judicial prerogatives of Psellos's client *basilikos*.

Another indicator of social status that can occasionally be glimpsed in the sources is promotion. There were many reasons for promotion, including extraordinary achievements on the battlefield, wealth and personal or family networks, and relationship to the emperor.

In a harangue of Constantine VII to his troops in late 950, upon their return from successful military actions against the Hamdanids along the eastern frontier, the emperor identifies soldiers worthy of rewards: “The strategoi who command the smaller themes will be transferred to larger ones, while the strategoi of larger themes will be honored with gifts and other recompense, whereas the commanders of the tagmata and other units who fight courageously will be rewarded in proportion to their deeds, some to become tourmarchs, others kleisourarchs or topoteretai.”<sup>76</sup> The first known Phokas, a soldier under Basil I and great-grandfather

ἀμφοτεροδεξιῶσαι τουρμαρχάτον), ἐλνπήθην δὲ ὅτι ἀπομακρύνεις”; see also *ibid.*, 1:257.

70 A. A. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, vol. 2, *La Dynastie macédonienne (867–959)*, pt. 2, *Extraits des sources arabes*, trans. M. Canard (Brussels, 1950), 413.

71 D. F. Sullivan, A.-M. Talbot, and S. McGrath, eds. and trans., *The Life of St. Basil the Younger: Critical Edition and Annotated Translation of the Moscow Version*, DOS 45 (Washington, DC, 2014), 292–99, quotation at 294§12.6–8. But for the relative nature of status differentiation in Byzantium, see L. Neville, *Authority in Byzantine Provincial Society, 950–1100* (Cambridge, 2004), 78–85.

72 *PmbZ*, no. 25558; *Vita S. Mariae Iunioris*, *AASS Nov.* 4: 695B, 695F–696A, 699A, trans. A. E. Laiou, “Life of St. Mary the Younger,” in *Holy Women of Byzantium: Ten Saints' Lives in English Translation*, ed. A.-M. Talbot (Washington, DC, 1996), 262–64, 272, and I. Sevcenko, “On the Social Background of Cyril and Methodius,” in *Studia palaeoslovenica* (Prague, 1971): 341–51, esp. 349 n. 47.

73 In the *vita* of Maria the Younger, the saint appears to her husband and orders him to build a church for her relics; *V. S. Mariae Iunioris*, 698F–699A, trans. Laiou, “Life,” 271–72. Leo Argyros (fl. ca. 843/44) renovated the monastery of St. Elizabeth in his home district of Charsianon; Theophanes Continuatus, 165.12–21, J.-F. Vannier, *Familles byzantines, les Argyroi: IX<sup>e</sup>–XII<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris, 1975), 19–20, no. 1, and *PmbZ*, no. 4506. A Basil is mentioned in the dedicatory inscription of a reliquary likely made in Constantinople and dated to the tenth century, and which was presumably donated to a church or monastery; *PmbZ*, no. 20957. Between 921 and 927, a tourmarch, possibly named Padiates, donated a fresco-decorated church (Eğri Taş Kilisesi) near Ihlara (Yeshilkoy) in the valley of Peristremma in Cappadocia; *PmbZ*, no. 26219.

74 In general, W. E. Kaegi, *Byzantine Military Unrest, 471–843: An Interpretation* (Amsterdam, 1981), esp. 209–92. A rebellion against Leo III by the Helladikoi, led by its tourmarch Agallianos, occurred in 726/27; *PmbZ*, no. 113. Andronikos and Theophilos were two leaders (along with Gregory, bishop of Sinope) in the rebellion of the Armeniakon against Constantine VI following the restoration of Eirene and the blinding and imprisonment of the former strategos of the Armeniakon, Alexios Mouseli; *PmbZ*, no. 431 (Andronikos) and no. 8195 (Theophilos). For Euphemios, see V. Prigent, “La carrière du tourmarque Euphémios, basileus des Romains,” in *Histoire et culture dans l'Italie byzantine: Acquis et nouvelles recherches*, ed. A. Jacob, J.-M. Martin, and G. Noyé (Rome, 2006), 277–317 and *PmbZ*, no. 1701. To these could be added a fifth individual, Thomas the Slav, who has traditionally been identified as the Thomas mentioned in Genesios (7.14) and Theophanes Continuatus (7.3–4), whom Leo V appointed tourmarch of the *phoideratoi*. However, Juan Signes Codoñer argues that this Thomas and Thomas the Slav are in fact 2 separate individuals: J. Signes Codoñer, *The Emperor Theophilos and the East, 829–842: Court and Frontier in Byzantium during the Last Phase of Iconoclasm* (Burlington, VT, 2014), 34–35 and 183–96.

75 *PmbZ*, no. 20697 (Atzmoros) and no. 20750 (Balantios).

76 E. McGeer, “Two Military Orations of Constantine VII,” in *Byzantine Authors: Literary Activities and Preoccupations. Texts and Translations Dedicated to the Memory of Nicolas Oikonomides*, ed. J. W. Nesbitt (Leiden and Boston, 2003), 120.





FIG. 12 Dedicatory inscription on east wall of Eğri Taş Kilisesi identifying the tourmarch Padiates, ca. 921–27 (photo courtesy of Jordan Pickett)



of Nikephoros II, was noticed by the emperor while on campaign in Cappadocia and appointed tourmarch.<sup>77</sup>

Both written sources and seals reveal a regular military cursus.<sup>78</sup> Yezid, in the eighth century, served as *droungarios*, tourmarch, and komes of the imperial stables.<sup>79</sup> Leo, tourmarch of the Thrakesion in the mid-eighth century, was subsequently promoted first to hypostrategos and then to strategos of the Thrakesion.<sup>80</sup> The husband of Maria the Younger, Nikephoros, was promoted to tourmarch of Bizye after having served as droungarios.<sup>81</sup> Marinos, the father of the empress Theodora, was either a droungarios or tourmarch, suggesting that these were part of a regular career path.<sup>82</sup>

Demetrios Katakalon, who was active in the second half of the eleventh century, was promoted from tourmarch to strategos, and then to *katepano* and *doux*. As he attained higher and higher office, the dignities on his seals increased dramatically: spatharokandidatos (tourmarch); *patrikios* (strategos); *anthypatos* and *patrikios* (katepano); *vestes*, *anthypatos*, and *patrikios* (private seal); *proedros* (private seal); and *protoproedros* (*doux*).<sup>83</sup> A similar trajectory is evident for Niketas Glabas, an officer in the third quarter of the eleventh century, whom Skylitzes reports as a *protospatharios* and *topoteretes* of the schools in 1050. Seals from later in his career attest his rise to *patrikios*, *hypatos*, and strategos, and then to *magistros* and *katepano*.<sup>84</sup>

This regular cursus of promotion, however, abutted the imperial prerogative to appoint individuals to

positions as necessary.<sup>85</sup> This could be ad hoc, as was the case with Kalokyres, who was promoted to the rank of *patrikios* before being sent by Nikephoros II to deal with Svyatoslav of the Rus'.<sup>86</sup> Nikephoros Ouranos was not a career military officer but was named domestikos of the West in 996, *doux* of Antioch in 999, and, according to a seal, "archon" of the East around the year 1000.<sup>87</sup> This personal distribution of titles and offices, especially to supporters, was a regular practice and could function as a mechanism for control over the elite. Such is the case with Bardas Phokas, who rebelled, and, Leo the Deacon reports, "began to promise distributions of money, and to offer awards of dignities, appointing taxiarchs and generals, and the glorious positions that an emperor is accustomed to offer generously to his supporters." In response, John I sent Bardas Skleros against the rebels: the emperor "entrusted to [Skleros] documents sealed with the imperial seals of gold, in which were written appointments of taxiarchs, generals, and *patrikioi*."<sup>88</sup>

This study of promotion underscores an obvious point: a regular path of promotion, from greater to fewer superior positions, naturally results in the arrested progress of the majority at some middle point. The *vita* of Maria the Younger informs us that Nikephoros's rise terminated with tourmarch, in which position he served for almost three decades.<sup>89</sup> A study of the dignities and iconography on military seals reveals a divide, at least in the tenth and eleventh centuries, between the first and second tier of the Byzantine officer class, one that lends further nuances to the social profile of the tourmarchs.

The appearance of dignities on seals (fig. 13) provides a somewhat more objective basis for discussing social profile, especially across the centuries of the office's existence. Until the second half of the ninth

77 *PmbZ*, no. 26651. Cheynet notes that "Il est sûr que c'était un soldat aux belles vertus guerrières, mais qui n'appartenait pas à l'élite de l'aristocratie, puisque le récit rapporté explique précisément son intégration à cette élite": J.-C. Cheynet, "Les Phocas," in Dagron and Mihăescu, *Traité sur la guérilla*, 290.

78 It is important to keep in mind, however, that both the military and civil hierarchies were more fluid at some times than at others; see Brubaker and Haldon, *Iconoclast Era*, 608–16.

79 *PmbZ*, no. 2656.

80 *PmbZ*, nos. 4354 (tourmarch) and 4361 (hypostrategos, strategos).

81 *PmbZ*, no. 25558; *Vita S. Mariae Iunioris*, 692E and 694E, trans. Laiou, "Life of St. Mary the Younger," 256 and 259.

82 *PmbZ*, no. 4812.

83 *PBW*, Demetrios 20103.

84 *PBW*, Niketas 106 (topoteretes, strategos) and Niketas 20228 (katepano). Jordanov, *Corpus*, 2: no. 145 treats these seals as belonging to the same individual.

85 Effectively, all appointments were made orally: Oikonomides, *Listes*, 282–83.

86 Leo the Deacon, *History*, ed. and trans. A.-M. Talbot and D. Sullivan (Washington, DC, 2005), 111.

87 *DOSeals* 3: no. 99.11 (tenth/eleventh century); E. McGeer, "Traditional and Reality in the *Taktika* of Nikephoros Ouranos," *DOP* 45 (1991): 129–31.

88 Phokas: Leo the Deacon, *History*, 163; Skleros: *ibid.*, 166.

89 Brubaker and Haldon, *Iconoclast Era*, 609 note that "many officers in junior or middling positions spent most of their career in the same province or army, moving away only when," or *if*, "they attained the most senior positions."

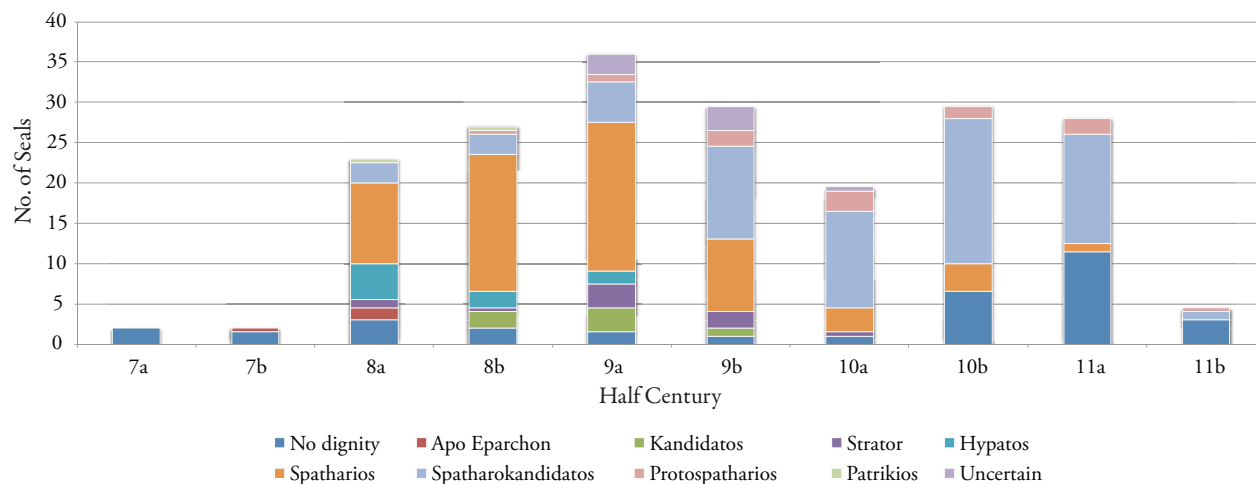


FIG. 13 Titles appearing on seals of tourmarchs, normalized by half century. Titles include imperial form, e.g., “spatharios” includes imperial spatharios (chart by author)

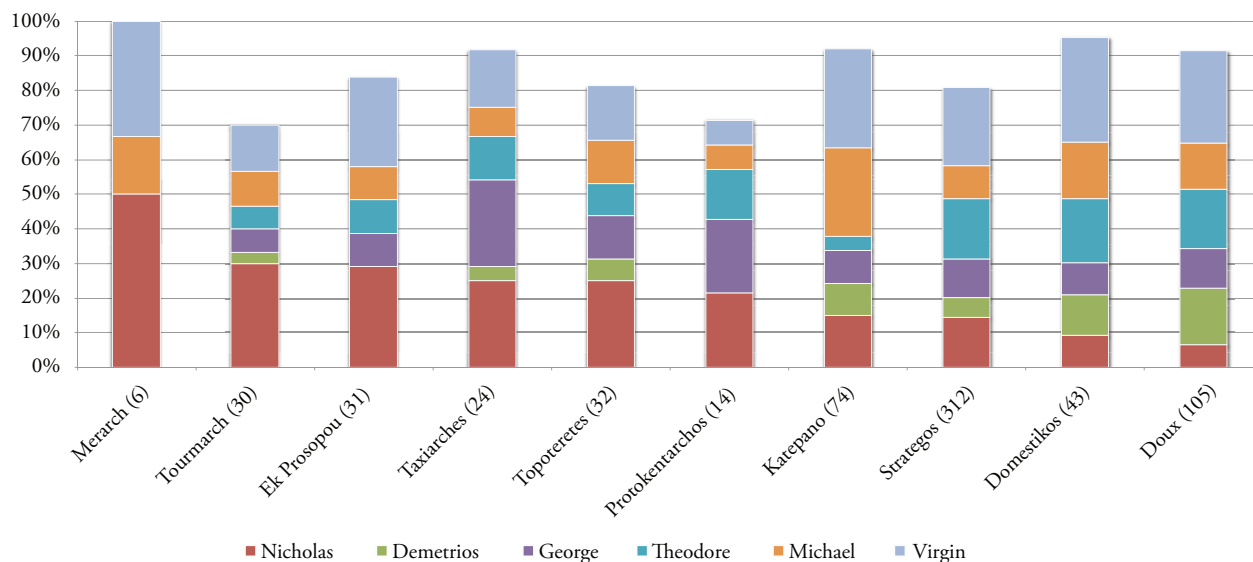


FIG. 14 Religious figures on seals of military officers, as a percentage of total iconographic seals for each office (chart by author)

century, *spatharios* and imperial *spatharios* are the most frequent dignities for tourmarchs. From the second half of the ninth century, however, *spatharokandidatos* and imperial *spatharokandidatos* come to dominate, while almost half of eleventh-century tourmarchs' seals do not include a dignity at all. With few exceptions, tourmarchs were situated firmly in the second rank.

This division between higher and lower classes of officers, seen also in the gifts they receive from the

emperor, is further reflected both in primary sources and on seals. Unlike the elaborate ninth-century *Taktikon Uspenskij* and *Kleterologion* of Philotheos, the *Taktikon Beneshevich* and *Taktikon Escorial* are more abbreviated. Tourmarchs appear as the final officers listed in the former, while they do not appear at all in the latter. The hierarchical, articulated listing of officers in the *Taktika* of Leo VI contrasts with the *De velitatione*, in which



only the strategos and tourmarch (and one mention of a *topoteretes*) appear as named officers.

On seals, this division is further apparent in iconographic choices. John Cotsonis has shown that from a corpus of 7,390 iconographic seals, the most frequent holy figures that appear are the Virgin (3,188, 43.1%), Nicholas (684, 9.3%), Michael (518, 7.0%), Theodore (452, 6.1%), George (458, 6.2%), Demetrios (280, 3.8%), and John Prodromos (196, 2.7%).<sup>90</sup> Although he discusses the military representatives of thirty-two families that are well represented by seals, he does not treat military seals as a group.<sup>91</sup> We can compare these percentages to the military corpus (table 1). Unsurprisingly, the military saints, especially Theodore, Michael, George, and Demetrios, appear with greater frequency.<sup>92</sup> However, when we chart iconographic seals by office, another pattern emerges (fig. 14). Here, the top rank of subordinate officers—merarchs, tourmarchs, taxiarchs, *topoteretai*, and *protokentarchs* (figs. 15–18)—depict St. Nicholas on their seals at a significantly higher rate than do their superior officers—katepanos, strategoi, domestikoi, and *doukes*. Although Nicholas cannot be considered a military saint, one of his more popular miracles, preserved in the *Praxis de Stratelatis* and numerous frescoes, was his intervention on behalf of three generals who found themselves the victims of intrigue at the court of Constantine I.<sup>93</sup>

90 J. Cotsonis, "Onomastics, Gender, Office and Images on Byzantine Lead Seals: A Means of Investigating Personal Piety," *BMGS* 32, no. 1 (2008): 1–37, esp. 10 and 18.

91 Ibid., 25–32.

92 C. Walter, *The Warrior Saints in Byzantine Art and Tradition* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT, 2003), 44–93; J.-C. Cheynet, "Le culte de Saint Théodore chez les officiers de l'armée d'Orient," in A. Avramea, A. Laiou, and E. Chrysos, ed., *Byzantium State and Society* (Athens, 2003), 137–54. As for Demetrios, this increase is particularly notable given the rarity of the name Demetrios more broadly; Theodore, George, and Michael are much more likely to be homonymous with the seal owner. It should also be emphasized that this is at the level of the individual and his relationship to the military establishment or vocation; Cotsonis has made clear that the choice of military saints is not adopted on the seals of "military" families any more than "civil" saints.

93 G. Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos: Der heilige Nikolaos in der Griechischen Kirche* (Berlin, 1913–17), 1:66–96; N. Ševčenko, *The Life of Saint Nicholas in Byzantine Art*, Monografie, Centro Studi Bizantini, Bari 1 (Turin, 1983). For other examples of saintly intervention on behalf of falsely accused officers, see Neville, *Authority in Byzantine Provincial Society*, 45–46 (n. 71 above).



FIG. 15 Nicholas (?), spatharokandidatos and tourmarch (tenth/eleventh century), BZS.1947.2.286 (Dumbarton Oaks, Byzantine Collection, Washington, DC)



FIG. 16 Stephen, merarch or tourmarch (tenth/eleventh century), BZS.1951.31.5.2059 (Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Bequest of Thomas Whittemore)



FIG. 17 Leo Gabras, spatharokandidatos and chiliarch (eleventh century), BZS.1958.106.2158 (Dumbarton Oaks, Byzantine Collection, Washington, DC)



FIG. 18 Constantine, *kentarch* of the Hikanatoi (tenth century), BZS.1958.106.1564 (Dumbarton Oaks, Byzantine Collection, Washington, DC)

| Saint                | Total | Military | % Difference |
|----------------------|-------|----------|--------------|
| Virgin               | 43.1% | 23.6%    | -45.2%       |
| Nicholas             | 9.3%  | 14.3%    | 49.0%        |
| Theodore Stratelates | 6.1%  | 14.8%    | 142.6%       |
| Michael              | 7.0%  | 12.0%    | 71.4%        |
| George               | 6.2%  | 10.9%    | 75.8%        |
| Demetrios            | 3.8%  | 7.5%     | 97.4%        |
| John Prodromos       | 2.7%  | 3.0%     | 11.1%        |

TABLE 1. Religious figures on the total corpus of Byzantine iconographic seals, compared to the seals of military officers

It is only in the second half of the tenth century that seals depicting holy figures constitute a significant percentage of total seals. The Virgin comes to predominate on seals beginning in the second quarter of the eleventh century, so the rates at which other religious figures appear between about 950 and 1025 are correspondingly higher. Nicholas appears on 9.3% of all Byzantine iconographic seals, from the sixth through fifteenth centuries, but the seals of subordinate officers on which he is depicted date to a narrower period.<sup>94</sup> It is possible, therefore, that the rate at which Nicholas appears on the seals of subordinate officers is closer to the rate at which he is depicted on all seals dating from the mid-tenth to early eleventh centuries, and therefore that the prevalence of Nicholas can be attributed simply to the popularity of the saint in society generally.

Cotsonis has demonstrated that we must be cautious in interpreting an individual's iconographic choice; the selection of a patron saint for depiction on seals was intensely personal, with few patterns emerging based on family or occupation, with the exception of bishops. Perhaps a better question is not whether subordinate military officers including Nicholas on such a high proportion of their seals is anomalous, but instead why the top-tier officers depicted him so infrequently.

In any case, the distinction between the first and second rank is clear on seals; what remains is to suggest why. If officers chose to depict saints like Demetrios, George, Theodore, and Michael because of their military associations, did this mean that first-rank officers, such as strategoi, thought of their office in a different

way than did their subordinates? This does not seem likely; individuals rarely changed the iconography on their seals, and so we would expect an individual to depict the same saint when he was a tourmarch as when he was a strategos.<sup>95</sup> This is evident in the few cases where careers beginning at subordinate rank are attested by seals with figural iconography: Eudokimos, merarch and tourmarch (Nicholas); Demetrios Katakalon, tourmarch, strategos and katepano, and doux (Demetrios); Niketas Glabas, strategos and katepano (Nicholas); and, one of the exceptions, Constantine Kourtikios, taxiarch (Theodore and Demetrios) and strategos (Nicholas).<sup>96</sup> I would suggest that what drove top-tier officers to depict military saints at a higher rate was not simply the fact that they held high military office, but that they were more often than not members of families that had a history of military command. Tourmarchs are among the first members of families belonging to the military aristocracy, such as the Dokeianos, Maniakes, Argyros, and Phokas families,<sup>97</sup> and the office was a possible entry point into the aristocracy.<sup>98</sup>

Although this is highly conjectural, I would suggest then that Nicholas is more likely to be depicted on seals by military officers who do not come from families (yet) with histories of military service, and therefore that the frequency with which subordinates depict the bishop saint reflects their status as either lower-ranking or first-generation aristocrats. Put another way, after an individual successfully ensured his family's place in the

95 A rule with some notable exceptions: Cheynet and Morrisson, "Texte et image" (n. 47 above), 18–20.

96 Protospatharios, hypatos, and taxiarch of Mokka' (mid-eleventh century): W. Seibt, "Ταξίαρχης Μωξηγάς—Ein byzantinischen Kommandat in Mokka' um die Mitte des 11. Jh.," *Handes Amsorya* 107 (1993): 145–48; patrikios and strategos (after 1050s): V. S. Shandrovskaja, "Vizantiiskie pečati armianskikh deiatelei XI–XII vv.," *Istoriko-Filologicheskii Zhurnal* 1(134) (1992): 190–91, no. 3. See also Jordanov, *Corpus*, 2:246.

97 Romanos Dokeianos (1020–50): Shandrovskaja and Seibt, *Bleisiegel der Staatlichen Eremitage* (n. 3 above), no. 71. Joseph Maniakes (eleventh century): Jordanov, *Corpus*, 1: no. 50.1 (= 2: no. 421); on the Maniakes family: Ch. Stavrakos, "Unedierte Bleisiegel der Familie Maniakes. Der Fall Georgios Maniakes," *SBS* 8 (2003): 101–11. Leo Argyros: *PmbZ*, no. 4506 and above, n. 73; Phokas: *PmbZ*, no. 26651 and possibly no. 6218.

98 Niketas Xeros, spatharokandidatos and tourmarch of Seleukeia (tenth/eleventh century), is the first known member of the Xeros family, known primarily for producing civil officials: *DOSeals* 5: no. 6.24 and J.-C. Cheynet, "Les Xèroi, administrateurs de l'empire," *SBS* 11 (2009): 1–34, esp. 2.

94 Cotsonis, "Onomastics," 3 and 18.

military aristocracy, subsequent members of that family would be more likely to hold high military office. With that precedent, family members would be more likely to serve as a strategos, a katepano, or a doux, and with this assurance, would be more likely to depict a military saint.

This social profile can help us contextualize the changing nature of the tourmarch's authority from the eighth to the eleventh century. I have shown that toponymy on seals is related to the fiscal-administrative theme system of provincial administration; that is, tourmarchs were more likely to include the name of the tourma or unit over which they exercised authority if that authority had a civil as well as a military component. The social profile of tourmarchs before this period of increased toponymy (before ca. 800), however, was different than in the period after about 950. Even if, as must be admitted, the rebellious eighth- and ninth-century tourmarchs discussed above represented only a small percentage of the total officeholders, their tenth- and eleventh-century successors were not positioned to shape events in similar ways. The reason for this was a change in the nature of the office and its authority, a change driven by the development of new administrative structures. This change in the office was concurrent with a decline in the social profile of the officeholders.

However, this is the top-down view, an empire-wide perspective. A final group of sources, archival documents from Athos and southern Italy, provide evidence for tourmarchs as local actors. What we see is that tourmarchs continued to play a role in local society decades after they disappeared from documents produced in the capital.

### Tourmarchs as Local Actors

In the core provinces of the empire, tourmarchs appear infrequently in archival sources. Basil, tourmarch of the Bulgarians, received land in Chalkidike by a decree of Basil II, sometime before November 996, although he was forced to renounce his claim to the portion that had been confiscated from the Polygyros monastery.<sup>99</sup> Also involved was the former tourmarch Leo, who was one of thirteen *synedriazontes* at the trial in

Kassandrea, and one of eight sent to the disputed property, along with the *paroikoi* of Polygyros, to testify to the estate's exact boundaries.<sup>100</sup> In May 1008, Nicholas, spatharokandidatos and tourmarch, signed as the first of seven witnesses to a contract between the inhabitants of Radochosta, by which they laid down the exact boundaries of land that they had previously sold to the Akindynos monastery, and ceded future claims on the land; Nicholas's nephew Christopher wrote the contract.<sup>101</sup> Around 1060, Moschonas, together with a John, Theodora, and Maria, the daughter of the protospatharios Theodoros Gymnos, donated the *proasteion* of Partarea (Chalkidike) to Esphigmenou.<sup>102</sup> Finally, Mousileios, spatharokandidatos and tourmarch, served as a witness in August 1062 to determine the boundaries of the properties at Ezoba, a cause of dispute between the local bishop and Ivion.<sup>103</sup>

From these examples, it is clear that tourmarchs could be significant landholders, as was the case with Basil and, perhaps, Moschonas. The actual relationship of the tourmarch to local society, however, is unclear. Christopher could have belonged to Nicholas's household, rather than the tourmarch and his nephew being inhabitants of the region with established ties. Mousileios resided at Serres, along with several other witnesses: not locals, therefore, but the most important officers stationed in the region, together with influential inhabitants. More significantly, in all but the Radochosta document, the figure of the krites dominates the proceedings. Two letters of Michael Psellos,

100 *PmbZ*, no. 24540. Saradi, "Byzantine Tribunals" (n. 64 above), 170 notes that the thirteen members of the tribunal served in their capacity as officers of the imperial administration. If this is the case, then the inclusion of Leo on this tribunal reveals the continued use to which former officials might be put. Former officials appear in the *Taktikon Uspenskij*, e.g., οἱ σταθάριοι καὶ ἀπὸ τουρμαρχαί: Oikonomides, *Listes*, 59.2. The former droungarios Basil Eladikos appears in numerous Athonite documents relating to Hierissos from the two decades of the eleventh century; *PmbZ*, no. 21082. A seal of a Leo, imperial protospatharios and ex-strategos (tenth/eleventh century) is in the Dumbarton Oaks collection (BZS.1958.106.3902).

101 P. Lemerle, A. Guillou, and N. Svoronos, *Actes de Lavra*, vol. 1, *Des origines à 1204* (Paris, 1970), 138.30–32 (no. 14); *PmbZ*, no. 26112 (Nicholas) and no. 21326 (Christopher).

102 J. Lefort, *Actes d'Esphigmenou* (Paris, 1973), 58.9–10 (no. 5); *PBW*, Moschonas 101.

103 J. Lefort, N. Oikonomides, and D. Papachryssanthou, *Actes d'Ivion*, vol. 2, *Du milieu du XI<sup>e</sup> siècle à 1204* (Paris, 1990), 103.22 and 104.44 (no. 35); *PBW*, Mousileios 101.

99 *PmbZ*, no. 21007 and J. Lefort, N. Oikonomides, and D. Papachryssanthou, *Actes d'Ivion*, vol. 1, *Des origines au milieu du XI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1985), no. 10.



from 1057, to the strategos of Abydos and the krites of Thrace and Macedonia, reveal the relationship of these officials. The basilikos of Madytos, a client of Psellos, is in competition with the tourmarch of Haplokonesos. The recent tourmarch was dismissed for impinging on the basilikos's authority, and Psellos writes to the strategos and krites to protect the basilikos and closely monitor the new tourmarch.<sup>104</sup> Although it is clear that the tourmarch is still a significant figure in local society, the legal documents and Psellos's letters show a changed landscape, by the middle of the eleventh century, from that of the ninth and early tenth.

In contrast to evidence for tourmarchs' activities in the core provinces during the late tenth and eleventh centuries, the sources for southern Italy attest their importance and ubiquity in local society. Given the nature of the surviving documentation, their profile is overwhelmingly legal or judicial.

Latin documents include double-titles such as *iudex et turmarca* and *turmarca et kritis*, and several tourmarchs are recorded as presiding over legal proceedings, including disputes and records of donation and sale.<sup>105</sup> When they are not directly presiding over a legal dispute, tourmarchs could also act as advocates or legal advisers. Porfiro was tourmarch and *advocatore* for the monastery of St. Benedict in Polignano, for which he drafted a contract naming Sabinus as the successor for abbot Peter.<sup>106</sup> Gaideris, *imperialis comes cortis et turmarca* in 1024, advised John, archbishop of Bari, when he left his church to his nephew Nicholas. John designated Gaideris as "advocata nostri."<sup>107</sup>

Many tourmarchs are listed as landowners and belong to families that had local importance.<sup>108</sup> The will of a certain Maio, a tourmarch who died in 1013, included among his heirs his relative Porfiro, also a tourmarch, suggesting that the office could become invested in certain families.<sup>109</sup> In addition, several individuals held multiple offices alongside that of tourmarch; in addition to judge/*iudex*, these include *komes tes kortes*, *episkeptites*, and *komes*.<sup>110</sup>

Finally, the documents attest a high concentration of tourmarchs. Three tourmarchs appear as first, fourth, and seventh of seven witnesses in the 1007 deed of gift of the *presbyteros* and *hegoumenos* Kosmas; further, the vineyards and fields of Kosmas bordered the hog pens belonging to a fourth tourmarch, Anthimos.<sup>111</sup> In 1015, the tourmarch Ursulus gave, together with his father and other relatives, the *kastellion* Petra tou Typhlou and its properties to the Ananias monastery and its abbot, Loukas; Theodoros, tourmarch and *polites*, witnessed this gift.<sup>112</sup> Three tourmarchs appear in a 1024 contract by which the abbot of St. Benedict in Polignano (Apulia), Peter, named the monk Sabinus as his successor. These include the first and third witnesses

104 See above, n. 64.

105 Examples include Grimoald, tourmarch of Bari in 1003 (*PmbZ*, no. 22501); Maio, also tourmarch of Bari, who presided, alongside the *iudex* John, over the sale of a building in the city in 1009 (*PmbZ*, no. 24821); and Lupo, *turmarcho. et comes.*, in whose presence a document recording a donation near Bari in August 1017 was signed (*PmbZ*, no. 24797). Regarding an unnamed tourmarch in Conversano "qui tandem tenevat in ipsa civitate" (*PmbZ*, no. 31942), Jean-Marie Martin notes that while legal acts only show *iudices* and *kritai* exercising civil jurisdiction, this tourmarch exercised criminal jurisdiction: J.-M. Martin, "Les thèmes italiens: Territoire, administration, population," in *Histoire et culture dans l'Italie byzantine. Acquis et nouvelle recherches*, ed. A. Jacob, J.-M. Martin, and G. Noyé (Rome, 2006), 532.

106 *PmbZ*, no. 26723.

107 *PmbZ*, no. 22055.

108 A guarantee and donation of June 1053 lists as the final witnesses Daniel and Xenion Maurokontares; the same Xenion, now a tourmarch, is listed as first witness in a donation of three years later; A. Guillou, *La Théotokos de Hagia-Agathè (Oppido) (1050–1064/1065)* (Vatican City, 1972), 101.23 (no. 22) and 153.11 (no. 37). Other members of the same family are attested during the 1050s; see *ibid.*, 131.24, 26 (no. 30); 141.8 (no. 33); 144.14 (no. 34); and 159.18 (no. 39). Four tourmarchs number among the landholders registered in the region of Rhegium, ca. 1050; A. Guillou, *Le Brébion de la métropole byzantine de Région* (Vatican City, 1974), 166.59 (Eustathios), 188.370 (anonymous), 193.431 (Leo Aztimoros), and 193.433 (John). In 1197/98, the priest Matthew Papatyrsou identifies in his will an orchard that he shares with the tourmarch George and a certain Gounnares—an orchard with neither olive trees nor mulberries; S. G. Mercati, C. Giannelli, and A. Guillou, *Saint-Jean-Théristsè (1054–1264)* (Vatican City, 1980), 213.26 (no. 41).

109 *PmbZ*, no. 24822 (Maio) and no. 26722 (Porfiro).

110 For a full listing, see Martin, "Thèmes italiens," 533–34.

111 G. Robinson, "History and Cartulary of the Greek Monastery of St Elias and St Anastasius of Carbone, II, 1," *OC* 15, no. 2 (1929): 133–37; *PmbZ*, no. 23345 (John); *PmbZ*, no. 26110 (Nicholas); *PmbZ*, no. 26624 (Philippos); *PmbZ*, no. 20468 (Anthimos).

112 F. Trinchera, *Syllabus Graecarum membranarum quae partim Neapoli . . .* (Naples, 1865), no. 15; *PmbZ*, no. 28412 (Ursulus) and no. 27856 (Theodoros).



(of twelve) as well as Porfiro, tourmarch and adbocatore, who drafted the contract.<sup>113</sup>

Only in two other contexts do we see a similar concentration of tourmarchs in other Byzantine sources: in narratives of battles and their aftermath, and in the document listing the officers and troops available for the 949 expedition to Crete. The dozens of greater and lesser tourmarchs from the Charpezikion theme, although an extreme example, seems to be the closest analogue to what we are seeing in southern Italy. Nicolas Oikonomides suggested that the high proportion of officers from that theme joining the expedition to Crete in 949 was “un moyen visant à assurer une certaine discipline” among, as Eric McGeer notes in agreement, Armenian soldiers, whose “unruliness and unreliability” was “proverbial.”<sup>114</sup> However, the document does not explicitly state the origins of the officers themselves; perhaps, like the example of M'leh, the office of tourmarch was employed as a means of integrating local grandees into the Byzantine system.

To explain the high number of tourmarchs in southern Italy, André Guillou and Vera von Falkenhausen suggested the establishment of a large number of compact, territorial tourmai according to the Byzantine model.<sup>115</sup> Nicolas Oikonomides echoed this view, arguing that an administrative structure analogous to that developed in the 940s and 950s on the eastern frontier, with a high proportion of officers over relatively small units composed primarily of infantrymen, is the only thing that explains the high number of tourmarchs who appear in these southern Italian documents—especially in view of the installation of Armenian contingents in both southern Italy and the Balkans.<sup>116</sup>

Jean-Marie Martin, however, has argued for the continuity of Lombard law and structures in place in Apulia before the Byzantine reconquest. According to Martin, instead of closely grouped tourmai, there were no territorial sub-circumscriptions of the theme except for the hinterland of fortified cities and towns.<sup>117</sup> *Gastalds*—“les représentants généraux de la puissance publique à l'échelon de la cité”—were gradually replaced by tourmarchs, who would have been drawn from the same group of locals.<sup>118</sup> The evidence from the legal documents for the tasks undertaken and authority exercised by these southern Italian tourmarchs, as well as their local origins and prominence, supports this view. If this is the case, it could join with a number of other instances of accommodation of regional power structures in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

## Conclusions

This survey of the tourmarch's office, which has touched on its appearance over six centuries, has demonstrated that the officeholder's duties, the nature of his authority, and his social profile were highly contingent on the administrative structure of the empire. A tourmarch in the eighth century may have filled the same place in the military hierarchy as one in the tenth century, but at the same time, he would also have likely been of higher social rank. The change in the provincial administration in the early ninth century is reflected in seals, and I have argued that the inclusion of a place-name on seals attests to not only this reorganization but also a change in the nature of the office. A reversal of this trend in the tenth century was simultaneous with two other developments: the establishment of new, smaller frontier themes and the placement of judicial authority in the provinces in the hands of *kritai*. Place-names, then, continued to indicate the duties of the office and the authority held by the tourmarchs.

The argument for a uniform system of administration, however, assumes that officers in each region fulfilled the same duties. This is difficult either to support or to refute, as the sources are substantially different. In the east, tourmarchs continue to appear in military contexts, whether taking part in the expedition

113 *PmbZ*, no. 22632 (Hosylo), no. 27067 (Sifaldo), and no. 26723 (Porfiro).

114 N. Oikonomides, “L'organisation de la frontière orientale de Byzance aux X<sup>e</sup>–XI<sup>e</sup> siècles et le Taktikon de l'Escorial,” in *Actes du XIV<sup>e</sup> congrès international des études byzantines, Bucarest, 6–12 septembre 1971*, ed. M. Berza and E. Stănescu (Bucharest, 1974–76), 1.298–99 and E. McGeer, “The Legal Decree of Nikephoros II Phokas Concerning the Armenian *Stratiotai*,” in *Peace and War in Byzantium: Essays in Honor of George T. Dennis, S.J.*, ed. T. S. Miller and J. W. Nesbitt (Washington, DC, 1995), 134–35.

115 A. Guillou, “La ‘Tourma’ des Salines dans le thème de Calabre (XI siècle),” *Mélanges de l'Ecole Française de Rome, Moyen Age-Temps Modernes* 83 (1971): 9–29; V. von Falkenhausen, *La dominazione bizantina nell'Italia meridionale dal IX all'XI secolo* (Bari, 1978), 120.

116 Oikonomides, *Listes*, 346.

117 Martin, “Thèmes italiens,” 521.

118 *Ibid.*, 530–35 (quotation at 531) and *idem*, *La Pouille du VI<sup>e</sup> au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Rome, 1993), 232–34, 698–99, 705–11.

to Crete or fighting in northern Syria. The seals from Bulgaria attest to a significant presence of tourmarchs, and the historical context certainly suggests a military role. However, the evidence from archival sources from Athos and southern Italy presents a different side: tourmarchs as local elites and landowners. In particular, the appearance of tourmarchs throughout legal documents from southern Italy demonstrates the flexibility of the office by the end of the period under discussion, as it was applied to a number of different local contexts.<sup>119</sup> What is unclear, and what is probably not recoverable, is whether these differences are due entirely to the sources available, or if they illustrate real regional variations.

In any case, beyond the static picture presented by a majority of the sources as well as many modern studies, the shape and development of the office over six centuries reflects the dynamics of Byzantine society and administration. To the extent that the sources permit us to compare individuals across space and time,

the late twelfth-century tourmarch George, whose fields lacked olive trees and mulberries, appears very different from the early eighth-century Christopher, whom Justinian II sent to Cherson, and the intervening centuries witnessed hundreds of others whose duties and authority differed as much. The evidence of seals especially helps us to see long-term trends, including the relationship of toponymy and authority. These trends, in turn, allow us to refine our understanding of the contexts, the time and place, in which tourmarchs appear in written sources. If we accept tourmarchs as integral elements of middle Byzantine administration, these different contexts, consequently, reveal the strategies the empire deployed to control its core and frontier provinces.

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119 What Jean-Claude Cheynet calls “la souplesse d’adaptation de l’administration byzantine” in his review of J.-M. Martin, *La Pouille du VI<sup>e</sup> au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, in *REB* 53 (1995): 377.

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